

CLAIMS

1. A management interface hub mediating between a
procurer of goods or services and providers of goods
or services, wherein communication between said
5 interface hub and said providers is via any one of a
selection of communication methods.
2. The interface hub of claim 1 wherein all records
relevant to the procurement of said goods or services
are maintained on said interface hub databases.
- 10 3. The interface hub of claim 1 wherein said interface
hub mediates between a plurality of procurers of
goods or services, each one of said plurality of
procurers obtaining goods or services from a set of
providers offering similar product.
- 15 4. The interface hub of claim 1 wherein the choice of
said providers is dictated by criteria other than
price.
5. The interface hub of claim 1 wherein said
communication methods between said providers and said
20 interface hub may include:
 - (a) e-mail over the internet
 - (b) facsimile transmissions
 - (c) postal mail services
 - (d) internet pages

(e) telephone

(f) data connection

- 5 6. The interface hub of claim 1 wherein communication between said procurer of said goods or services and said interface hub is via an internet web site.
- 10 7. The interface hub of claim 6 wherein said communication between said procurer and said interface hub includes the transfer to said interface hub of orders for goods or services, said orders specifying a selected one of said providers.
- 15 8. The interface hub of claim 6 wherein said communication between said procurer and said interface hub includes the transfer to said interface hub of orders for goods or services, said orders specifying criteria for the selection of a selected one of said providers.
- 20 9. The interface hub of any one of claims 1 to 8 wherein said communication between said interface hub and said procurer includes the transfer of data received from said providers, said data processed and formatted by said interface hub to conform to the requirements of said procurer, said data further presented for access by said procurer in digital form.

10. The interface hub of claim 9 wherein said orders are initiated by said procurer.
11. The interface hub of claim 9 wherein said orders are initiated by authorized agents of said procurer.
- 5 12. The interface hub of any one of claims 1 to 11 wherein said interface hub includes a document processing facility adapted to the extraction of data from paper documents for entry into digital databases.
- 10 13. The interface hub of claim 12 wherein said interface hub is adapted to process said providers to become registered providers to said procurer.
14. The interface hub of claim 13 wherein registration permits access by said registered providers to
15 specified areas of said databases maintained by said interface hub.
15. The interface hub of any of claims 1 to 14 wherein said goods or services are in the form of data.
16. The interface hub of claim 15 wherein said interface
20 hub is adapted to initiate payments to said providers in return for goods or services presented to said interface hub.
17. The interface hub of claim 15 wherein said interface hub is adapted to pay variable amounts according to

criteria associated with response from provider and wherein said criteria include:-

- (a) speed of response
- (b) length of response
- 5 (d) communication method

18. The interface hub of claim 17 wherein said database is provided with input protocols specific to said procurer and said providers.

10 19. The interface hub of any one of claims 1 to 18 wherein said providers communicate with said interface hub via said internet web site.

20. The interface hub of any one of claims 1 to 18 wherein said providers communicate with said interface hub via facsimile transmission.

15 21. The interface hub of any one of claims 1 to 18 wherein said providers communicate with said interface hub via postal mail service.

20 22. The interface hub of any one of claims 1 to 21 wherein said providers are paid for goods or services provided on presentation of invoice.

23. The management interface hub of any of claims 1 to 22 wherein said hub is adapted to the collation of statistical data relating to the interactions between said hub, said procurers and said providers, said

data providing for quality control, prevention of fraud and industry benchmarking of said interactions.

24. An intermediary procurement management hub adapted to the ordering, collection and preparation of formatted and homogenized data relevant to transactions between at least one procurer and one of a set of providers, wherein said providers are linked by a commonality of service offered to said one procurer.
25. The management hub of claim 24 wherein said commonality of service is that provided by General Practitioners and Specialists, and wherein said data includes Private Medical Attendant's Records requested by said procurer via said hub.
26. The management hub of claim 24 wherein said commonality of service is that provided by repair services to insurance companies, and wherein said data includes records relating to services requested by said procurer via said hub.
27. The management hub of claim 24 wherein said commonality of service is that provided by paramedical and pathology services.
28. The management hub of claim 24 wherein said commonality of service is that provided by repair services to insurance companies.

29. The management hub of claim 24 wherein said commonality of service is related to the provision of references in support of applications for employment made to said procurer.
- 5 30. The management hub of claim 24 wherein said commonality of service is related to the provision of labour to said procurer.
31. The management hub of claim 24 wherein said data includes time sheet and time verification data
10 requested by said procurer.
32. The management hub of claim 24 wherein said data includes documentary verification data requested by said procurer.
33. The management hub of any one of claims 24 to 32
15 wherein the transfer of data between said procurer and said management hub is by means of an internet web site.
34. The management hub of any one of claims 24 to 32 wherein said the transfer of data between said
20 providers and said management hub is by means of an e-mail.
35. The management hub of any one of claims 24 to 32 wherein said transfer of data between said providers

and said management hub is by means of facsimile transmissions.

36. The management hub of any one of claims 24 to 32 wherein said transfer of data between said providers and said management hub is by means of a postal service.

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37. The management hub of any one of claims 24 to 32 wherein said transfer of data between said providers and said management hub is by means of a telephone service.

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38. The management interface hub of any of claims 24 to 37 wherein said hub is adapted to the collation of statistical data relating to the interactions between said hub, said procurers and said providers, said data providing for quality control, prevention of fraud and industry benchmarking of said interactions.

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39. A method for the procurement of goods or services required by a procurer from one of a set of providers linked to said procurer by a commonality of goods or services wherein said goods and services are in the form of data, through the use of a management interface hub, said method including the steps of:

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(a) said procurer placing an order for goods or services on said management interface hub by

means of data entry via an internet web site
maintained by said management interface hub,

(b) said order specifying one or more providers or
criteria for the selection of said goods or
services,

(c) said management interface hub establishing a
first method of communication with said one of
said set of providers,

(d) said management interface hub arranging
registration of said one of said set of
providers, said registration conferring access
by said one of said set of providers to said
management interface hub databases,

(e) said one of said set of providers returning
data to said management interface hub through a
second method of communication.

40. The method of claim 39 wherein said first or second
method of communication includes the methods of:

(a) data entry through an internet web site

(b) facsimile transmissions

(c) postal service mail

(d) telephone

(e) data connection

41. The method of claim 40 wherein said management interface hub processes data received from providers into a homogenized digital data set formatted according to the requirements of said procurer.
- 5 42. The method of claim 39 wherein data received from said one of said set of providers through facsimile or postal service mail is processed for data extraction through character recognition (OCR) software.
- 10 43. The method of claim 42 wherein said management interface hub collates orders from a number of said procurers for goods or services required from a one of said providers, said hub alerting said provider to said orders by means of a list displayed on:
- 15 (a) an internet web page;
- (b) a facsimile transmission;
- (c) a notification by post;
- (d) a data connection transmission;
- 20 44. A management interface hub mediating between a plurality of procurers of goods or services and any one of a plurality of providers of goods or services, wherein said interface hub is adapted to direct requests for supply of said goods and services to appropriate ones of said plurality of providers.

45. The interface hub of claim 44 wherein communication between said hub and said providers of goods and services is via any one of a selection of communication methods.
- 5 46. The interface hub of claim 44 wherein all records relevant to the supply of said goods or services are maintained on interface hub databases.
- 10 47. The interface hub of claim 44 wherein the choice of said providers is dictated by criteria other than price.
48. The interface hub of claim 45 wherein said communication methods between said providers and said interface hub may include:
- (a) e-mail over the internet
 - 15 (b) facsimile transmissions
 - (c) postal mail services
 - (d) internet pages
 - (e) telephone
 - (f) data connection
- 20 49. The interface hub of claim 44 wherein communication between said procurers of said goods and services and said interface hub is via an internet web site.
50. The interface hub of claim 49 wherein said communication between said procurers and said

interface hub includes the transfer to said interface hub of orders for goods or services, said orders specifying criteria for the selection of a selected one of said providers.

- 5 51. The interface hub of any one of claims 44 to 50 wherein said communication between said interface hub and said procurers includes the transfer of data received from said providers, said data processed and formatted by said interface hub to conform to the requirements of said procurers, said data further presented for access by said procurers in digital form.
- 10 52. The interface hub of any one of claims 44 to 51 wherein said interface hub includes a document processing facility adapted to the extraction of data from paper documents for entry into digital databases.
- 15 53. The interface hub of claim 52 wherein said interface hub is adapted to process said providers to become registered providers to said procurer.
- 20 54. The interface hub of claim 53 wherein registration permits access by said registered providers to specified areas of said databases maintained by said interface hub.

55. The interface hub of claim 54 wherein said interface hub is adapted to initiate payments to said providers in return for the presentation of data to said interface hub confirming supply of goods or services.
- 5 56. The interface hub of claim 55 wherein said interface hub is adapted to pay variable amounts according to criteria associated with response from provider and wherein said criteria include:-
- (a) speed of response
 - 10 (b) length of response
 - (c) communication method
57. The interface hub of claim 56 wherein said database is provided with input protocols specific to said procurers and said providers.
- 15 58. The interface hub of any one of claims 44 to 48 wherein said providers communicate with said interface hub via said internet web site.
59. The interface hub of any one of claims 44 to 57 wherein said providers communicate with said
- 20 interface hub via facsimile transmission.
60. The interface hub of any one of claims 44 to 57 wherein said providers communicate with said interface hub via postal mail service.

61. The management interface hub of any one of claims 44
to 60 wherein said hub is adapted to the collation of
statistical data relating to the interactions between
said hub, said procurers and said providers, said
5 data providing for quality control, prevention of
fraud and industry benchmarking of said interactions.
62. The interface hub of any preceding claim wherein data
and/or documents pertaining to compliance with
current taxation provisions relevant to the
10 commercial transactions between said service
providers and said service procurers is captured for
inclusion in said hub databases.

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